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The Influence of Education justified,
with Regard to the Profession of
Christianity. ~~693.e.12.~~

A
SERMON
Preached before the
UNIVERSITY
OF
OXFORD,
At St. MART's,

May 6. 1744.

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OXFORD,

Printed at the THEATRE for *James Fletcher* Bookseller
in the *Turl*, and Sold by *M. Cooper* in *Pater-Noster-Row*,
LONDON. 1744.

Imprimatur,

GUALT. HODGES

Vice-Can. Oxon:

Jun. 4. 1744.

2 TIM. III. 14, 15. —

But Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

And that from a Child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, —

HOW plausibly soever the Prejudice of Education, and the Influence of Example have been urged, in order to depreciate the Profession of Christianity, Yet that both Instruction and Authority, under proper Regulations, have their real Use in forming the first Outlines of Virtue and Religion, in guarding the tender and defenceless passages of Life from the Impressions of Vice and folly, and conducting the unstable Soul, *till it comes unto a perfect Man, unto the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ*, is what general Practice has asserted, and is a Truth confirmed by general Experience.

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It hath been objected indeed, that every Degree of Influence, arising from external Impressions, is inconsistent with the Deductions of Reason; and therefore, that either all Means of Information ought to cease, to make way for the free Use of uninstructed Reason, or Christianity must pass for an Irrational System, if to be advanced by such Methods: tho' at the same time, as such, it be impiously attributed to the Sole and immediate Inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God.

But St. *Paul's* Exhortation to *Timothy*, in the Words before us, hath advanced another Doctrine. He speaks to Him, of Learning and Instruction, previous to his Profession of Christianity: He proposes the Pattern of his Instructor, as what He ought always to have in View: He reminds him of his Application to the Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, even from his Infancy. And upon these particulars, He forms his Admonition to him, to continue stedfast in a Profession founded upon these Principles. *But Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, &c.*

From an Apostle, who recommends Christianity, as *our Reasonable Service*^a; Who pro-

^a Rom. XII, 1.

poses *the Will of the Lord*, as the Object of our *Understanding*^a; Who calls upon his Followers, to make themselves Masters of the most evident Proofs of Reason, both for their own Confirmation^b, and the Conviction of Gain-sayers^c; And Who Himself, throughout his Epistles, in Defence of the Gospel, both against Jews and Gentiles, argues with so much strength of Reason and Demonstration; One would hardly expect, upon Infidel Principles, an Appeal like that of the Text, to the Impressions of a Religious Education. Rather should the Reasoning Apostle have discouraged every thing of that kind, as Unwarrantable Prejudice and Prepossession; as *an Undue Cultivation of the most notorious and palpable Prejudices; as unfairly anticipating the Strength of the Evidence; and powerfully retaining Men to a Party, before the Means of trial were put into their hands*^d.

But far different, as I observed, are the Sentiments of the Apostle. Instruction, Example, and the Early knowledge of the Scriptures, are with him, no Unreasonable Prepossessions. He approves their Influence, and upon this footing establishes the Conduct of his Disciple.

^a Eph. V. 17. ^b 1 Thes. V. 21. ^c Col. IV. 6. ^d Christianity not founded on Argument, &c. p. 102.

What is proposed in the following Discourse, is to justify the Proceedings of a Religious Education; in opposition to those Principles, by which it hath been exploded, as disingenuous and Irrational; and indeed, as incongruous with an Impartial Profession of Christianity. In order to which, I shall endeavour to shew,

I. That these principal Advances towards a Religious Education, here insisted on by the Apostle, are so far from being inconsistent with the Due Use of our Rational Faculties, that they are the best and truest Improvement of them. And therefore,

II. That a Profession of Christianity, establish'd in this Method, stands upon a Reasonable and lasting Foundation.

I. That these principal Advances towards a Religious Education, here insisted on by the Apostle, are so far from being inconsistent with the Due Use of our Rational Faculties, that they are the best and truest Improvement of them.

Besides what might be alledged in this behalf, of the weakness and Imperfection of Human Reason in general, especially in its present degenerate State, It must be allowed, that its first Efforts, in the Dawnings of its Power,

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are feeble and languid, dark and unstable; and loudly call for Assistance and Support. There is a State of Infancy for the Soul, as well as for the Body: A gradual Ascent towards Maturity. And as there is Employment sufficient for Art and Experience, in directing the Progress of the Corporeal System from its Birth; in watching its Infirmities, in supplying its Necessities, in forming its Motions, and confirming its growing Vigour: So is it no less wanted, for Cultivating the Infant Mind, by throwing in a Successive Supply of easy and seasonable Notions; by guarding the Affections, and regulating the Will.

These are approved Methods of Instruction: Inasmuch as we cannot form a more contemptible Figure of Human Nature, than by exhibiting to View, One on whom these first Impressions have either never been bestowed, or in whom they have afterwards been perversely neglected. The Man is lost under the Appetites of the Brute; And hath nothing to glory in, but what ought to be his Shame, the figure and Similitude of a Man.

To these will naturally succeed the Implanting such Notions, as will raise the Mind towards a Superiour Being; and whatever hath any Dependence upon it: The necessary and inde-

independant Existence of a first Cause; The Superintendancy of Providence; The Immortality of the Soul; The immutable Difference between Good and Evil; and The necessity of Rewards and Punishments. For whatever Progress may have been made herein, by the advantage of a Superiour Genius, or whatever may be vainly expected from unassisted Reason, in the general Run of Mankind, the necessity of additional Instruction is too apparent, tho' too frequently ineffectual. And these primary Principles of Religious Instruction are no other than the Improvement of Right Reason, and the due Application of it to its Proper Object, whatever Methods are of Use in promoting the former, can never justly be excepted to, as prejudicial to the latter.

The Slow, and almost imperceptible Advances which are made, in every Branch of Knowledge, even with all the advantages by which they are capable of being promoted, are but so many melancholy Instances how little is to be expected from the generality of Mankind exclusive of those Advantages. The Evidence of this Reflexion is too apparent to all, who labour in the Important Charge of Instruction. The Returns seldom keep pace with the laborious Office: The Task of the Learner will

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generally put on the Appearance of greater Intricacy, than the Task of the Instructor. And what Reason can there be to hope, that the weighty Knowledge of Divine Truths, should find an easier Admittance, than that Knowledge which is only to be look'd upon as Instrumental and accessary to the other? It hath its Difficulties to be encounter'd; its Perplexities to be Solved: It hath oppositions of various kinds to deal with, from various Tempers and Dispositions; whether Dulness, or Inactivity; Gaiety, or Perverseness. And even, under the Circumstances of a happier Constitution, the Obstacles it may meet with from external Discouragements, do plainly speak the Necessity of some Regular Discipline and Information, in order to a competent Degree of Proficiency even in these first Principles of Religious Literature.

And then, as to the Conduct of Moral Virtue, so agreeable to all the Rules and Maxims of Right Reason in its highest degree of Perfection, Yet how deficient is it like to prove, from the Temptations and Discountenance it hath to struggle with, if left to it self, without the Assistance of a more mature Judgment, to Infil the Seeds, and Propagate the Increase of it? The tender Passions are susceptible of,

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and lay open to every Impression. And therefore, the worst are liable to be taken, with as much ease as the best: the general Corruption of Human Nature may warrant us to say, with more. But however, tho' it should be even admitted, that Human Nature (a Supposition hardly to be allow'd of even in Speculation) may of it self, without the Assistance we are pleading for, be capable of rising by degrees, to the most Exalted Pitch of Vertue; Yet that the Work may sooner, and therefore the more effectually be accomplish'd, by the Help of an early and faithful Conductor, than it could without it, is alone sufficient to turn the balance: And this can be no question, considering the Advantage of the first Possession, which may in this Case be fairly taken, without Prejudice to the Rights of Reason; and the Imminent Hazard thereby avoided of leaving the Mind expos'd to the Invasion of every pernicious Vice.

The Truths of Revelation come next in View. And if these alone are to have no Regard among the Principles of Religious Instruction, the Event will soon discover the Absurdity of the Omission. The Advantage in this Case on the Side of Infidelity is obvious; In as much as the Tendency of this Proceeding,

ing, is not barely to suspend, or to preserve the Mind disengaged from Prepossession in favour of the Doctrines of Christianity, but to open a Way to the Reception of every Cavil and Objection against it. This is not to guard against Prejudice and Prepossession, but to expose the unexperienced Mind to a barbarous and almost certain Hazard, of being entangled unawares in those of the most pernicious and destructive kind. The Adversary is too watchful to be insensible of this Advantage; and too diligent to overlook the Improvement of it. And if the Malignancy is thus suffer'd to take root without restraint, the maturer Age of Life will hardly be perswaded to throw off the Infection; at least, without the Assistance of the same powerful Interpositions, with which the first Preachers of the Gospel were enabled to Compass the Conversion of the Heathen World to the Faith. If these be the most favourable Terms that can be allow'd to the Evidences of Revelation; If they are not to be heard, till the Mind is first confirmed in all the Principles of Infidelity, the Cause is given up at once, and nothing more remains but the Establishing Iniquity by a Law.

And after all, what is there in the Principles of Christianity so terrible, that all the a-
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venues of Instruction must be thus studiously shut against them? Do they obstruct the natural Rights of Mankind? or in any Shape break in upon the Laws of Society? Do they invalidate the Obligations of any one Moral Vertue? Or is Christianity now at length become a novel Institution, calculated to Impose upon Ignorance and Inexperience? Surely, the Test of Ages must have some weight in these Considerations.

But the Tyranny of infusing Articles of Faith is what cannot be admitted upon any terms. To be obliged to believe, is to make that necessary which ought to be left voluntary: Otherwise, the Faith of the Pupil will be no other than the Faith of his Instructor; and not his own.

But is Faith, taking it under the general Notion for an Assent of the Mind to things credible, ever throughout the Christian Institutes required without Evidence? If not, as the Contrary, however pretended, can never be made appear, what follows will carry with it some Solution of the Difficulty. Whatever offers it self, as credible upon proper Evidence, a Man is not at Liberty to reject, without Guilt; His Will indeed is free to stand in Opposition to Truth, as well as to act in Contradiction

tradiction to the Rules of Moral Vertue; but what He hath Sufficient Evidence to be convinced of the Truth of, from thence in point of Duty, becomes no longer a thing Voluntary to Him, but He is laid under a Necessity of giving his Assent to it, if He would act the part of a Rational Being. Where the Proposal is made to a Person of mature Judgment, who can and does sincerely weigh the Evidence before him, and is convinced by it, the Assent in this Case is most properly his own, however the Means are convey'd to him, even tho' they pass to him thro' the hands of another. The Precepts of an Instructor do not in any sense, as such, oblige a Man to believe. He only collects the Evidence, and lays it together in the fairest Light; a Work, which no just Exception can be taken to: The Merit of the Assent is still depending; tho' the Merit of the Instructor will be fully justified, in the Sight of God and Men, if He hath performed his Office with Faithfulness and Integrity.

Indeed, as to the Immature State of Life, either entirely destitute of the Exercise of Reason, or labouring under slow Advances towards it, whether in Infants, or Adult persons who have hardly escaped the Imperfections of Infancy, the Case is far otherwise. Here no explicit

plicit Acts of Faith are expected; because neither the Will nor the Understanding have attained to that Perfection, requisite for these purposes. But however, the Discipline of Instruction becomes necessary even in this part of Life; at least, as to Facts, and a gradual Explication of those Reveal'd Truths, which may hereafter be made the Subject of a Rational Enquiry, and upon full Conviction, the Objects of a truly Christian Faith. For the Introduction of Facts must be prior to any Inquisition that can be made concerning them; and those Facts must in some measure be render'd obvious to the Capacity they are intended for, before any thing is finally determined as to their Truth or Falshood. Nay, though they are inculcated as Truths, and received as such, this doth not preclude the necessity of a Subsequent Examination; And in the mean time, this Instruction is found to be the securest Guard against those known Obstacles to an Impartial Search after Truth, Ignorance and Self-Conceit; as well as to furnish the Mind with a commendable Prejudice against every Vicious Inclination, so apt to obscure the dictates of a Right Understanding, and to cast an Injurious Biass upon the Motions of the Will. For a Careless Education, which

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will of Course be a wicked one, is the most apparent Injury to the Cause of Truth; especially such Truths, as are purposely intended for the Condemnation of Ignorance and Vice.

Thus far then, the Apostle appears to have been a Rational Advocate for Religious Instruction. *The things* which his Disciple *had learned and been assured of*, were not Truths of less moment, because thus acquired; nor rashly to have been thrown aside, out of an unjust Jealousy of their having been imbibed with Prejudice and Partiality. What He further urges him with, is the Influence of Example, as another Motive to him, to Continue in the Profession which He had embraced; *knowing of whom thou hast learned them.*

Evidence and Example, Reason and Authority, are not such incompatible things, as may be imagined. They often go hand in hand, and Cooperate usefully in promoting the same End. Were they to interfere with each other, and to recommend different pursuits, We know where the Preference ought to be given. Virtue and Vice, Good and Evil, have their Characters so unalterably fix'd, that as the former can suffer no Apprehension of Discouragement, nor the latter conceive any Hopes of Coun-

Countenance in the thoughts of a Rational Being, so will not the most eminent Authority upon Earth have Power to alter these determined Characters. But still, to reject every auxiliary Support, whether in Defence of Vertue, or in Opposition to Vice, though it boast it self in Theory, will in Fact have the Appearance of too arrogant a Presumption, whatever the Consequence may end in at last.

And in this Light is to be taken the Recorded Series of Examples, which are deliver'd down to Us for our Admonition; as well as those we have Opportunities of daily Converse with. They are as Standing Testimonies and Memorials of Instruction to us. They serve to imprint upon our Minds, whatever hath been collected by the Labour of Thought and Reflexion. They Justify the Rules of Vertue, by the Evidence of Experience; and soften its Austerity, by exhibiting it in Practice. Every Instance of Goodness is in this Sense an Appeal to the purest and most exalted Reason of Human Nature; calling forth others to Imitation, by one short and comprehensive Lesson, *Go, and do thou Likewise.*

And why is not the same additional Confirmation to be allowed its proper Weight in the Doctrinal points of Christianity? — I do
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not say, We are to believe, only because our Forefathers have believed before us. But if those who have gone before us in the Faith, have approved themselves to be Persons of Conscience and Integrity; have born the same Uniform Testimony, through evil Report and good Report; have held fast the Profession of the same Faith stedfast unto the End; This surely will help to strengthen the other Evidences, conveyed to us through their Hands; nor will the *Faith* of others whom we shall thus follow, be a blind and implicit Faith, while We consider the End of their Conversation.

There is a Moral Reverence to be paid to the Office of every Director; without which the Duties on either hand must prove greatly Defective. In regard to Parents, it is the Call of Nature; In regard to Others, who are substituted to the like Trust, it is the Call of Reason, as well as Revelation. If an Opinion of Superior Merit be not first establish'd, or afterwards be unhappily forfeited, *tho' the Tongues of Men, or of Angels* were employ'd, as the Instruments of Teaching, Yet *what would they profit?* On the other hand, with what Ease, with what Perspicuity, with what Cheerfulness, is every Precept imbibed, that comes

recommended with the perswasive Eloquence of an uncorrupted Reputation, both for Integrity and Capacity?

It would be needless to apply this Observation, to the Preachers of the Gospel of Christ; Since the Importance of it is so confessedly manifest, that the Cause of Infidelity can never think it self secure, while the Credit of the Clergy stands clear and untainted. *The Light of the World, and The Salt of the Earth,* are Characters, in any Sense, too insupportable to the Ears of an Infidel: As He is too sensible, to what *Shame* and *Confusion*, *He which is of a contrary part* is doomed, while *He hath no evil thing to say* of the Ministers of Christ, *the Stewards of the Mysteries of God.* A clear Evidence this; That a bright Example of Faith is a Confirmation of the Truths He would instil into others; a Confirmation founded in the general sense and reason of Mankind, and wisely adapted to the general Infirmities and Necessities of those, whose chief Concern it is to be instructed, which be *the first Principles of the Oracles of God.*

The Other remaining Branch of Religious Education, which the Apostle appeals to, for the Confirmation of his Disciple in the Profession of Christianity, is the Early Knowledge of
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the Scriptures; *And that from a Child, thou hast known the Holy Scriptures.*

Without considering here the Divine Authority of these Sacred Records, It is sufficient to the purpose, if those which *Timothy* had the Inspection of, and those which have been since receiv'd by Universal Consent, are allow'd to be a Collection of such Doctrines and Facts, as are propos'd for the Rule of a Christian's Faith and Manners. This can be no unreasonable Demand; as a Christian in this Case asks no more, than what would be indulg'd to Men of all Professions, to have their own Principles consult'd, as the Measure of their Profession. After this equitable Concession, the Matter will terminate in this short Issue; Whether, the most Early Notices of these Principles, imbibed even in Infancy, are not perfectly consistent with the Exercise of our Intellectual Faculties? Nay more; Whether they do not enlarge the bounds of its Power, and lay for it the Foundation of a more extended Dominion?

In every Science, there are Principles adapted to every degree of Capacity: And 'tis the most easy and natural Method, to instil the plainest and most familiar first. These are the Ground-work of the future Fabrick. For the
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Understanding must have something to work upon, before it can exert it self in any of its Operations. And the sooner it is supplied with Objects, proportion'd to its Capacity, so much the sooner will the Work begin; and the Mind be conducted, by insensible Advances, thro' the gradual Paths of Knowledge.

What We meet with in the Holy Scriptures, are either Historical Facts, or Points of Doctrine ingrafted upon those Historical Relations. Let the same Method then be applied here, as is approved of in other parts of Knowledge. The Historical parts of Scripture may be made the Introduction. These are level to the lowest Capacity; and even entertain and employ the Mind, which as yet they cannot instruct. But when the Mist of Life begins to dissipate; and the Understanding to unfold it self, as new Opportunities of Improvement are offer'd, new Light will succeed; and proper Reflexions and Enquiries may probably arise upon those Subjects which before had been taken for granted. This will naturally make way for a farther Progress in Divine Knowledge. The active Mind can never rest satisfied with simple Narratives. Nor can it ever be induced to perswade it self, that the Views of Revelation should terminate here.

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Accordingly, what hinders, but that it may call forth all its Powers, to a serious Pursuit of those Doctrines, which the History of Scripture directs it to the Search of? They are there indeed to be found, collected with Perspicuity, and tender'd with every engaging Motive; but not obtruded with Violence, in Contradiction to the Understanding. What hath the Mind of Man therefore here to do, but what the Scriptures encourage, to examine closely, *whether these things are so?* From the Verity of Facts, to trace their Consequences? From *proving all things*, to learn *to hold fast that which is Good?* And on this Foundation to erect the the Structure of a most Holy Faith.

This is the possible, and indeed the only probable Progress of the Understanding in the Study of the Scriptures, from its most Infant State to its Maturity. And if this be not Rational, Reason it self must be vain; and every Human Science must be also vain, and must fall to the ground, to make way for the Success of Irrational Infidelity.

But Scriptural Knowledge has Yet more to Glory in than this. It is not barely consistent with the Exercise of every Intellectual Faculty, but enlarges the Limits of the Understanding, by laying for it the Foundation of a more extended

tended Dominion. Objects are here presented to the View, which *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it enter'd into the Heart of Man to conceive* : but which every Eye *may* see, and every Ear *may* hear, and every Heart of Man be capable of conceiving, who hath been trained up by gradual Advances, to inure himself to the Contemplation of them. We need not have recourse to the Laborious Productions of past Ages, upon this Head ; While the present hath opened Such an unbounded Prospect, In those curious and regular Observations, which have been built upon the Records of Creation and Providence ; In those surprising Connexions and Inferences which have been traced from the Analogy of Reason and Revelation ; In that Judgment and Penetration applied to the unfolding the Scheme of Prophecy ; and in the clearest and most convincing Solutions of Scripture Miracles. Many other Instances might be given, in the several Defences of Revelation in general, as well as in particular Disquisitions, upon particular branches of the Christian System : Nay, the Labours of Infidelity it self will confess, that were it not for this inexhaustible Fund of Knowledge, many specious Opportunities of exerting it self, would be lost ; and hardly any thing

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left for exercising the Talents of Cavil and Contention, but the Mortification of encountering Vulgar and common Notions.

If then it appears that a Religious Education, formed upon the regular Principles of Instruction and Example; and the Early Knowledge of the Scriptures; is so far from being inconsistent with the due Use of Man's Rational Faculties, that it is the best and truest Improvement of them; We may proceed to infer from hence

II. That therefore a Profession of Christianity, establish'd in this Method, stands upon a Reasonable and lasting Foundation.

Human Nature is the same, whatever Profession it puts on. Even the most degenerate of the Species, in some Instances, and upon some occasions, cannot help discovering the Principle they are actuated by: tho' in some it be far more corrupted, and obscure than in others. But we may presume it to be the Will of the Creator, who implanted it, that it should never be quite obliterated and extinct, but with our Being.

But that the Ruins of Human Nature may be repaired; that the Corruptions of the *Old Man* may be put off, to make room for putting on the more amiable Perfections of the *New Man*.

Man, and Yet the *Man* continue still, and with a nearer Resemblance to the *Image in which He was at first Created*; is a thing easily conceivable, and in fact appears to have been the Result, as it was the declared Intention, of the Discoveries which have been imparted by the Revelation of the Gospel.

Among all the Lights of Christianity, it hath never been Reveal'd to Us, that We are Angels, and not Men. We keep the same Rank in the Order of Beings, which was at first assigned us, and are limited to the same Essential Properties of our Nature. In this Situation the Gospel treats with us; and it treats with us, by the Mediation of a Man, like ourselves, to shew that Christians were not expected to divest themselves of their Humanity, but to form themselves upon the most Perfect Pattern of Human Nature that could possibly be exhibited to them.

To this End, the Precepts of the Gospel are calculated. It takes Mankind, as it finds them; even attended with all their Deficiencies; and with a tender Regard to natural Infirmities, consults the natural Abilities of its Votaries, and *draws them with Cords of a Man*. — Even the Language of Scripture is adapted to this View; as not only, at that time of most general

ral Use; but in it self plain and easy as to Style, and for the most part clear as to Expression. — Its Motives are such, as are least liable to be evaded: Address'd to the most prevailing Passions; Yet consistent with the Liberty of Choice: Strong and perswasive; Yet not compulsive. — In short, the Path of Revelation is in it self one continued Train of Liberal Education; taking it only in this Light, as conducting Us by the most natural Instructions, the most engaging Examples, and the most perfect Rule of Life and Manners: And whence could Man hope for a more solid Improvement of his Faculties, than from a System *profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness?*

If this then were the Wisdom of the first Institution, its Vertue can never be impaired, by being derived to distant Ages. Human Nature is the same now, as when instructed by the Preaching of Christ and his Apostles: And their Doctrine is, or ought to be the same, as when first committed to the inspired Pen-men. If then both be consider'd in the same Light, Why must the Method of communicating be different from the Method of implanting? — Why were Guides at first appointed? — Why is a Succession of Guides so carefully provided

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for? — Why are We put under the Discipline of a Rule? — Why is that Rule so providentially preserved to Us? — Are these no Privileges to the Christian Profession? Or, has length of Time render'd them obsolete? — The Loss of the Advantages, would soon convince Us of their necessary Use: And a contemptuous Neglect of them is too sure a Fore-runner of their Loss.

It is pretended indeed, to make amends for this threatening Evil, that a Discovery has been started, of *the true Principle of Gospel-Evidence, in an Immediate, Universal, Instantaneous Illumination of the Holy Spirit of God*^a; Which is to render useless every Method of Rational Conviction, by *Irradiating Men's Souls at once, and Flashing Conviction in a Moment*. But with how little Sincerity this Position is advanced, and with what contumelious Irreverence towards the Operations of that Divine Spirit, may be judged from hence; That after having laboured to depreciate the Doctrines of the Gospel, and declared them to be irrational, This Writer is neither affraid nor ashamed to refer such Doctrines to the sole Influence of Divine Inspiration. This argues something

^a Christianity not founded &c. p. 56, 58, 59.

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worse than the Delusions of Enthusiasm. 'Tis an attempt under the Mask of Religion, to *do despite unto the Spirit of Grace.*

Many and various are the Citations of Scripture, alledg'd upon this Occasion; but to shew how unfairly and partially alledged, can neither come within the Compass or Design of this Discourse. It may only be observed here, with regard to this Favourite One, That the Case of St. *Paul's* Conversion, tho' evidently miraculous in its first Impressions, and therefore the fitter to work upon an *Officious Persecutor*, Yet doth not appear to have compleated its design at once, and in the Instant of the Appearance of that Heavenly Vision: More was still wanting to make him a Christian, and an Apostle. He was referr'd to the preaching of *Ananias*, for his farther Instruction: *Arise, and go into the City, and it shall be told thee, what thou must do.* And there, by the Instructions of this Teacher, and the edifying Inter-course of other disciples which were at *Damascus*, He increased so much in Strength, as soon to become a Preacher of that Faith which once he destroyed, proving to the Jews by incontestible Arguments, that *this is very Christ.*

The Assistance of the Holy Spirit of God, both in fixing the foundations of Christianity, and conducting the Superstructure; and ever since, in carrying on the same Uniform Design, by its benign Influences on the Hearts of the Faithful, can give no Colour of Reality to this dissembled Scheme, nor is any Bar to the Progress of Religion, upon the foot of Reasonable Evidence. For whatever extraordinary Light the Infant State of the Gospel was indulged in, as necessary for the Combat of Universal Prejudice, and Universal Corruption; as necessary for the Execution of those Powers, which were committed to its first Preachers; and whatever Spiritual Concurrence attends upon the sincere Endeavours of every Professor of Christianity, These are so far from precluding, in either Case, the Exertion of Men's Natural Powers, that they suppose a previous good Disposition in every Object of these Divine Favours, and even in others, the Ability to *resist and grieve the Holy Spirit of God.*

But to resume the more immediate Subject of this Discourse, the Discipline of a Religious Education. What is so highly applauded by the Apostle; What is countenanced in every branch of it, by the soberest Dictates of Reason.

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son, and confirmed by the Usages and Tendency of Revelation; What is perfectly consistent with every Spiritual Assistance; nay, a Requisite preparatory to receive more from the Hands of Him, *who giveth more Grace*; is not to be easily given up, because so confidently demanded. Every Christian hath an Interest in retaining the Possession of so valuable an Inheritance. Every Succession of Christians must experience a sensible Decay in the Neglect of it. And as the Consequence is of Such moment on either Hand, either in the Support, or Ruin of Christianity, Let us not part with the Stability of our Faith, to shelter it under false Disguises, impiously put on, to conceal the Venom of Apostate Infidelity.

The Piety of former Ages, in the Institution of Seminaries for Religion and Learning, hath wisely and effectually provided for the Improvement of both: And 'tis the Success of these Institutions, which has given the Alarm. But Irreligion will hardly long lift up its Head, while the Trust reposed in *the Schools of the Prophets*, continues to be discharg'd with Fidelity and Constancy, and to meet with favourable Returns, in the Industrious Attention of every Religious Student.

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To be the Mark of Obloquy and Reproach, hath always been the Badge of the Christian Profession: And the Guardians of that Profession have the Honour to stand the most exposed: Distinguish'd by the Breath of Infamy, as Distinguish'd by the Office to which they have been appointed.

In these will be the Refuge of discountenanced Christianity. As long as the Precepts of Human Literature are directed to the Promotion of Divine Knowledge; As long as Religious Instructions are enforced by Religious Examples; And both Instruction and Example speak nothing but the Language of *the Oracles of God*; The Exhortation of the Apostle, and with the same Divine Assurance, may be directed to every one of Us: *Continue thou, in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a Child, thou hast known the Holy Scriptures: And again; Those things which Ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in Me, Do; And the God of Peace shall be with You.*

F I N I S.

Printed for and Sold by *James Fletcher* in the *Turf*,
O X F O R D.

XXIX. Articuli Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ, textibus Sacr. Script. & Patrum primævum Testimoniis confirmati, brevibusque Notis illustrati. Adjectis insuper Nominibus Auctorum locisque in quibus Doctrina in Articulis contenta fufius explicatur. Authore Edv. Welchman Archidiacono Cardigan.

Xenophontis Memorabilium Socratis Dictorum Libri IV, Græcè & Latine, cum notis Integris Ernesti aliorumque selectis; nunc variis etiam novis observationibus adausi & illustrati. Huic Editioni accedunt Capitum, Verborum & Phrasum Indices locupletissimi.

Anglia Judaica: or the History and Antiquities of the Jews in England, collected from all our Historians, both Printed and Manuscript, as also from the Records in the Tower, and other publick Repositories, by D'Blossiers Tovey L.L.D. and Principal of New-Inn Hall, Oxon. 4to.

The Case of the Ministerial Maintenance stated. A Sermon preach'd at the Triennial Visitation of the Right Reverend Father in God Thomas Lord Bishop of Sarum, by John Spry B.D.

The Doctrine of a Future State, necessary to the Welfare and Support of Civil Government. A Sermon preach'd at the Assizes, held at Warwick, March 28. 1739, by William Cleaver M.A.

The Time of our Saviour's coming consider'd, as to its Fitness and Propriety. A Sermon preach'd before the University of Oxford, on Sunday, Mar. 6. 1742-3, By William Cleaver M.A.

Defence of Church Musick. A Sermon preach'd in the Cathedral Church of Hereford, at the Anniversary Meeting of the three Choirs, Worcester, Gloucester and Hereford, by Thomas Payne M.A.

The Eternity of Future Punishment asserted and vindicated. In Answer to Mr Whiston's late Treatise on that Subject. In two Sermons preach'd before the University of Oxford, by William Dodwell M.A.

The Jewish Dispensation considered and vindicated with a View to the Objections of Unbelievers, and particularly of a late Author call'd the Moral Philosopher. A Sermon preach'd before the University of Oxford, by Francis Webber M.A.

The Case of Authority consider'd, as it respects Religion particularly the Christian. A Sermon preach'd at the Assizes, held at Oxford, July 29, 1742, by Francis Webber M.A.

Mr. Hole's Sermon preach'd at the Consecration of the Parish Church of Werrington, Devon.

Reflections on the natural Foundation of the high Antiquity of Government, Arts, and Sciences in Egypt.

An Enquiry into the Scripture Doctrine concerning Future Punishment, occasion'd by some late writings, particularly Mr. Whiston's Discourse of Hell Torments, by Mat. Horbery B. D. Fellow of Magd. Coll. Oxon.

The Connection between Irreligion and Immorality. A Sermon preach'd at the Assizes held at Oxford, March 1. 1743-4, by Ed. Bentham B. D.

Books

Books lately Printed in SCOTLAND, and Sold by *Jam. Fletcher* in the *Turk*, OXFORD.

Pindari Opera omnia quæ extant. Olympia, Pythia, Isthmia, cum Interpretatione Latina.

Epicteti Enchiridion, Cebetis Tabula, Prodicus Hercules, & Cleanthis Hymnus. Omnia Græce & Latine.

Theophrasti Characteres Ethici, ex recensione Petri Needham, cum Versione Latina H. Casauboni.

Demetrius Phalereus de Elocutione, five Dictione Rhetorica. In hac Editione, contextus Græcus ex optimis Exemplaribus emendatur, Versio Latina passim ab erroribus repurgatur; & Loca à Demetrio laudata, quæ hæcenus Græce tantum extabant, nunc primum Latinitate donantur.

M. T. Ciceronis de Natura Deorum Libri tres. Accedunt Boherii, Dacii & aliorum insigniores Lectiones Variantes & Conjecturae.

M. T. Ciceronis Tusculanarum Disputationum Libri quinque. Accedunt Lectiones Variantes, & Doctorum, præcipue Cl. Bouherii Conjecturae.

P. Terentii Afri Comædiæ sex: ex editione Wesselingiana Recensita, & Fidem duodecim amplius Mssorum Codicum, & plussularum optimarum Notæ Editionum.

Phædri Augusti Liberti, Fabularum Æsopicarum Libri quinque: ex Editione Burmanni.

Hutcheson Philosophiæ moralis Institutio compendiaria, Ethices & prudentiæ naturalis Elementa continens.

Synopsis Metaphysicæ, Ontologiam & Pneumatologiam complectens per Hutcheson.

The Meditations of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, newly translated from the Greek, with Notes, and an Account of his Life.

Select Sermons of Dr. Whichcot, in 2 parts, with a Preface by the Earl of Shaftsbury.

Novum Testamentum Græcum, cura Rhoddimanni.

Eleven Sermons on several Subjects, by Bp. Burnet.

More on the Attributes and Providence of God, with a recommendatory Preface by Hutcheson.

Instructions to a Son, containing Rules of Conduct in publick and private Life, by Archibald Marquis of Argyle.

A Plan of Education, by the Chevalier Ramsay.

The Gentle Shepherd, a Scots Pastoral Comedy, by Allan Ramsay.

Sir Tho. More's Utopia in English, by Bp. Burnet.